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UNCLAS YEREVAN 001089

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR EUR/CACEN-ESIDEREAS, DRL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PREL AM

SUBJECT: NO PROGRESS IN INVESTIGATION OF HIGH-PROFILE CASES OF VIOLENCE REPORTED

¶1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified, protect accordingly.

SUMMARY

¶2. (SBU) At his May 4 press conference Procurator General (PG) Aghvan Hovsepian admitted that they had as yet made no significant progress in the investigation of several high-profile cases of violence against journalists, a human rights activist, and a prominent opposition politician. Hovsepian also announced the establishment of a special department to combat government corruption. End summary.

NO PROGRESS IN HIGH-PROFILE INVESTIGATIONS

¶3. (SBU) PG Hovsepian's May 4 press conference was arranged to announce the establishment of a special anti-corruption division. Journalists, however, showed more interest in the status of the investigations of several high-profile cases, including the March 5 incident during an opposition rally when several well-muscled men attacked a group of journalists and smashed their cameras. Journalists also demanded follow-up on the attacks on prominent human rights activist Mikael Danielian and opposition politician Ashot Manucharian. Both Danielian and Manucharian were hospitalized as a result of these attacks; Danielian suffered from concussion while Manucharian underwent maxillofacial surgery. Hovsepian admitted there were no suspects or detainees for any of these cases despite the fact that journalists published photos of their assailants in almost every newspaper. According to Hovsepian, "just a picture is not enough." Also, Hovsepian complained about Danielian's "unwillingness to cooperate" with law enforcement and referred to him slightly as a "grant eater."

NEW ANTI-CORRUPTION DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHED

¶4. (U) Hovsepian also announced the establishment of a special department within the Procurator General's office to combat government corruption. According to Hovsepian, the department's regulatory powers will be clarified over the next ten days, however, there will be no new employees hired. The new department will work undercover to reveal and/or prevent corruption in the judicial, tax and customs agencies, as well as the procuracy.

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